

The Pocahontas Times.

If thou would'st read a lesson that will keep Thy heart from fainting

and thy soul from sleep, Go to the woods and hills.—Longfellow.

Vol. 20 No. 29

Marlinton, Pocahontas County

West Virginia, February 6, 1903

\$1.00 a Year

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DR. O. J. CAMPBELL,
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ON TO GRAFTON

An Account of one of the First Occurrences of the Civil War

They mustered in their simple dress. For wrongs to seek a stern redress. To right those wrongs come weal or woe. To perish, or overcome the foe.—Scott.

Sabbath morning June 2d 1861. Religious services were held on a lawn attached to a private residence. The speakers and leaders occupied the pulpit. The Rev. Mr. Hindman, a resident pastor of the M. E. Church, gave a timely, practical discourse on the blessing of faith. At the conclusion I was requested to lead in the closing services, which I improved as an opportunity for a somewhat extended exhortation in which I delivered a message to our boys sent them by their mothers, sisters and devoted young friends from Highland County. The purport of the message was "to be good and brave," avoid the temptations of the army camp, fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. That afternoon two young ladies rode rapidly down from the bridge and were hailed in the street about opposite the court-house by parties that recognized them as acquaintances and it was learned in a few minutes that they were young ladies from Fairmont with a message for Col. Porter, and they were shown to headquarters by their soldier acquaintances. The sudden arrival of these young ladies, the Misses Mollie Kerr and Mollie McLeod, was the sensation of the afternoon bringing, as it turned out, intelligence that the Union forces were quite strong at Grafton and an attack was planned for Sunday night on the Virginia troops at Philippsburg or the following morning at farthest.

These young ladies couriers had left Fairmont Sunday morning at a suspiciously early hour, heading for Philippsburg, and were unexpectedly detained at a blacksmith shop where they were closely questioned by a Union citizen—a stranger to them. Under assumed names they professed that they were on a visit to some friends in Barbour County and would certainly return that evening. The citizen appeared satisfied and passed on in the direction of Fairmont. The young ladies in the meantime rode rapidly towards Webster, but they were soon overtaken by this same Union man. He passed them and kept far ahead of them. Suspecting his purpose they chewed up some letters concealed about their persons and prepared themselves for being searched. When they came to Webster they found a large excited crowd of people collected and were closely interrogated, but the young ladies replied by proposing to submit to a search made by any respectable woman the crowd might select. Upon this they were permitted to pass on without searching and in about two hours reached Philippsburg and communicated the information about the intended attack.

Instructions were at once given for the Virginia troops to be in marching order at 5 p. m. I prepared myself accordingly and in compliance with an invitation given by a citizen living near Belington, I started out with him a few minutes before 5 o'clock. He was afoot and so we rode and walked alternately. His name was Thornhill. I reached his home about dark and found the place much crowded. Our accommodations were nevertheless very pleasant, and ample. Upon retiring that night all seemed prognostic of a quiet and restful time. Parson Rives, of Philippsburg, and myself had a nice room all to ourselves.

About day break Mrs. Morrill, who had come from Philippsburg in the night with her aged mother, came hurriedly to our room and asked what could all that noise mean down toward Philippsburg. Parson Rives my bedfellow jumped upon going out said it was cannonading and a battle must be going on at or near Philippsburg. I was listening I heard but one report, but could not be sure whether it was by cannon or a volley of musketry. For an hour or more all was quiet, but the silence was rudely broken in about two hours by fugitives rushing along the road as if for dear life, spreading the news that the town had been cannonaded and the Virginians were in full retreat coming on, pursued by the Union men.

A person, stranger to me, came up, having stripes on his uniform, was giving orders that all who might have guns should post themselves in ambuscade and take the men as they came along. These orders caused great consternation in our party, consisting largely of ladies, young and old. There being a buggy convenient, I suggested that Mrs. Morrill and her aged mother be placed in it and driven some distance from the road, which was done, and they knew where to find safe and pleasant refuge. Most all the other ladies crossed a hill nearby, where they were out of sight and threatened danger.

As for my part being without arms the extemporized officer had no authority over me, so I gathered up my luggage and prepared to fall back on Beverly. In the party that had staid at Thornhill's was a young refugee lady from Fairmont, mounted on a very fine horse. She introduced herself to me in a very pleasant modest manner, and told me some thing about her history. Her brother was a lieutenant in the provisional army of Virginia, that her father was a refugee from Fairmont, and by some means during the confusion at Philippsburg Sunday evening she and her father had gotten separated. If my memory serves me correctly his name was Alfred Haymond. I found the young lady quite sprightly and agreeable. I had her go with me from Mr. Thornhill's to Beverly. We lost sight of each other in the confusion of Beverly during the days of confusion confounded that transpired upon the arrival of the Virginia troops from Philippsburg, halting, a while at Beverly and then moving on to Huttonsville.

In reference to the attack on Philippsburg, the following is a resume of particulars gathered from the camp gossip at the time. When the troops were promptly in marching order Sunday evening, June 2, 1861, instructions were given to eat supper and wait for further orders. The officers in charge of the pickets and scouts were directed to bring word by midnight, and if it was not raining the march to Beverly would begin. The scouts reported at 12 o'clock and the pickets withdrawn and so from night on neither videttes nor pickets were on duty. It was raining in torrents and so Captain Sterrett, of the Churchville Cavalry, had supposed from the character of the instructions received by him that it was his duty to await further orders, and so did Capt. Stoffer, officer in charge of the pickets.

In the meantime the Union troops were advancing unobserved and unmolested and prepared for the attack at dawn. The first intimation the Virginians had of the Union men's approach was the firing of artillery from an eminence beyond the bridge on the opposite side of the river from the cavalry camp. It appeared that the Unionists had adopted this plan of assault; Philippsburg was to be approached at the north end, by two divisions, while a flanking detachment was to enter by the southern road simultaneously, cutting off all retreat. It seemed to have been intended that the attack should be brought on by the infantry upon the sleeping soldiers, followed up by the artillery opening on the cavalry camps at the northern limits of the town. Had this plan of battle been carried out the Virginians would have been slain or captured.

Through a very manifest Providence interposing, as the writer views it, confusion was brought upon the designs of the Unionists by the assault opening with the artillery. This gave the sleeping Virginians time to leave town before the infantry could cut off the retreat. The flanking party of Unionists came into position just as the last of the Virginians were passing out of the town upon the southern road. On the part of the Virginians a big blow was reported as lost. Two of three were seriously wounded. Leroy Dangerfield, of the Bath Cavalry, and Private Hanger, of the Churchville Cavalry.

The Unionists had their commanding officer, Col. B. F. Kelley severely wounded, near the southern extremity of the town, and as soon as that occurred all pursuit seemed to have ceased. The credit of this exploit was attributed to three different persons: Private Shafer, of Capt. Felix Hull's Highlanders; Lieut. Archie McClintic, of the Bath Cavalry; and Private Jacob W. Matthews, of a Tygart's Valley Company. The probabilities lean in favor of Matthews, but it seemed he was not inclined to press the matter as there was honor enough for them all, provided there be any honor in such an exploit.

It was reported among the Virginians at the time of their sojourn at Huttonsville that several of the Unionists were slain by their own people, while possibly a few might have been killed or wounded by the Virginians. Not very many however as only eight or ten Virginia soldiers were known to have used their guns. At the time referred to in this diary it was regarded as a well established fact that the Unionist artillery cannonaded their own Union troops by mistake. Persons claiming to have been at Philippsburg since the engagement report that nearly a hundred new graves were to be counted there. The Unionists captured over four hundred stand of arms and about a third clothing and camp equipage.

The Virginians reached Beverly in much confusion, very much broken in spirit, and their privations for several days were very grievous indeed to the most of them, having so recently left homes abounding with every personal comfort. One soldier whom I had known from his early boyhood and at whose apartment I had spent much of my time for two or three years, I recognized in my rounds in the camp near Huttonsville. He greeted me in

a very cordial manner and insisted that I should take breakfast with him for the sake of old acquaintance. "I must tell you that I have nothing but a piece of maple sugar and a piece of hard corn on the coals but it does not taste so bad after all to a hungry man."

With a mischievous twinkle in his eye he inquired about Harry Lightfoot, as my horse was named, how he liked war-time. He then told how Harry Lightfoot had spilled him and his cousin "Marsh" in the big road for shooting a gun over his head in order to train him for what he might have to go through with if people did not quit talking so much about having war. This young soldier was Charles Francisco of the Bath Squadron, who died in Russia in 1863, of a wound received July 3d.

The scenes between Be-orland Huttonsville and beyond were very sad. Numbers of men overcome by hunger, fatigue or sickness would lie upon the damp and muddy ground, apparently sound asleep. Others deemed themselves exceedingly fortunate to find a piece of plank or space on a bare floor in a dwelling or barn where they might seek relief from fatigue by sleep. It looked as if the risks in actual battle were but few compared to the risks of exposure, fatigue and disease, and that an early death would be the fate of many of these choice people.

How slowly, woe and sadness these days came and went. Time ever moved on wings of lead, it was a slow, dreary, days around Huttonsville and six days further up towards Mingo. In the most feeling sense of the word, Tygart's Valley now a vale of tears. Rumors were rife that the Unionists were gathering at Philippsburg and Buchanan in great force. In the meantime General Garnet came hastily over the eastern mountains with reinforcements and moved on immediately towards Laurel Hill and Rich Mountain. Reorganization was the order of the day with the soldiers I had been identified with. I had some trouble finding my nice shotgun. It had drifted up to Mingo Flats, and when I found it I turned homeward to McDowell by the way of Marlins Bottom.

The citizens of lower Pocahontas had arranged to observe the 20th of June as a day of fasting and prayer, recommended by the Virginia authorities. In company with my venerated mother, I attended two meetings, one in the forenoon at Buckeye, the other in the afternoon at Hillsboro. The services at Buckeye were led by the Rev. Joshua Buckley, assisted by Jonathan McNeil and Capt. William Cochran. It seemed to me that I had never seen people more devoutly humbled than the large audience that was present. The prayers had no spirit of revenge or complaint that was perceptible. Nothing was solicited, but what God deemed just and right to grant. The Lord of Hosts was feelingly implored to lead our men to battle and give success accordingly.

In the Hillsboro meeting in the afternoon, led by Rev. M. D. Dintal, who read and commented on the 144th Psalm. My attention was very much drawn to the principal prayer that was made by a prominent layman of one of the churches represented on the occasion. It was exceedingly prolix and abounded in minute specifications of the wrongs perpetrated on Virginia and her people, and her institutions, civil and religious. He arraigned the Unionists at the throne of grace to answer a long list of charges for invading the sacred soil of Virginia and the homes of peaceable and unoffending citizens, and for separating happy families who desired nothing better than to be allowed to remain under their own vine and fig-tree with none daring to make them afraid, as to social relations. Some of these families are now exiles from their homes and some are carried away as prisoners, our people being slain because they love their country and their rights purchased by the tears and blood of revered ancestors; and because they felt it their duty to obey God by being obedient to the powers that be, as His Holy Word enjoins. He most earnestly implored the making bare of the Almighty Arm to defend our people in this their hour of unspeakable trial.

Now while all that person said should have said in prayer was true and much to be desired, still I could not help feeling that such prayer is not of the proper spirit. It reminded me too much of his prayer who stood and prayed thus with himself in the temple: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." In prayer, in prayer, it seems to me, we should look at our own sins and leave the sins of the Unionists to God and ourselves, if God would by interposing make the much desired blessing to all concerned, Unionists and Virginians alike. Thus closes my diary virtually, transcribed as written forty years ago under the circumstances indicated there in.

No doubt our discerning readers have perceived ere this that the writer was usually in the van guard when the marching was

retrogressive; but when it was otherwise he was safe, comparative, in the rearward, during those weeks in May and June, 1861, he spent with the "foremost ranks in danger's dark career." And should they surmise that I greatly preferred to be a living non-combatant to be a heroic slain or wounded combatant, they will not miss it very far.

A WALK DOWN SOUTH
A Chapter from a Series of Articles in Forest and Stream

A Correspondent in Walking from New York to the South, passes down Jacksons River

Three or four miles out of Monterey I stopped at an ample sized house on the right (west) side of the road and asked if I could get dinner there. A fine, motherly middle-aged woman, when satisfied I was not a peddler, said, "Yes, indeed," if I would wait. In a few minutes a square shouldered, blue-eyed, golden-mustached man came in. He was a son of the lady, Charles K. Gibson, by name.

"That's quite a trick," he said of the pack and its outfit—an expression I soon became familiar with down Jacksons River, which I now was following. His eyes had the direct gaze, which is not a stare, with which one becomes more familiar the further south he goes.

Gibson likes to hunt. His dog is a bird and rabbit one, but is best for driving stock. His gun is a Spencer repeater. One day this fall he got into a flock of wild turkeys "back on the mountain." He shot four of the birds as quickly as one could have counted them. Less than a week previous to my coming he had killed one of the bronze fellows and seven pheasants in a day's hunt. "They're pretty thick," he said of the birds.

Dinner was of the sort one finds in the prosperous grazing country—beef with the blue grass and mountain range flavor, cooked in the pot and browned in the pan—nough said. It's hours to dinner to day and my appetite needs no whetting or memories.

Down the road a couple of miles I sat in a clump of woods to grease my shoes with castor oil. They had begun to turn tawny where the frozen ground wore them. While I was at this a sulky drove up. The woman driver gave one look at me and then wiped the horse along the back-bone with a long water beach gad.

It was quite a cold day—ten degrees below freezing at noon, I judge. But the people I met all agreed that it was "mighty fresh." Many wore sarafas, and with hooked fingers hovered over the fire-logs from these indications, and though it did not seem so bad to me, I could tell that it was unusually cold weather, and not the kind to which the inhabitants were used.

I came to an old grist mill. It was kept by an old man who said I would be welcome at his house, a three miles below. Round the foot of wooded ridge sides, past large rocks, with glimpses of log cabins far up runs, or cornfields on side hills, I traveled on down. I regretted the approach of night. It was a picturesque little valley, where one rounded a turn every step or two. After a while the road ran level along the ridge, while the stream fell over its rocky bed, till suddenly the path ran down to the creek again. A split rail fence corner showed ahead, and then a log house on the far side of the stream. It was E. A. McLaughlin's. He was splitting wood with a six pound axe. His head was covered by a red Tam o' Shanter hat. I crossed the single stick bridge, gripping the pole handle tight. I was told to set my pack inside and come up to the fire and warn. The invitation with which one is welcomed all down the mountain range during cold weather.

Here the old story of decreasing game is heard. Markets have done the work. In one fall thirty-two deer were killed at the stand just below the mill. Bears still are seen occasionally. McLaughlin told of a big one over on the Alleghenies in the Greenbrier country, which "rolled out from under a log" onto the approach of a party of hunters in which he was. The bear reared up on his hind legs and trotted off like a fat man. Bullets and buckshot brought the beast down. Then it was found that both its forelegs had been cut off by traps—one at the wrist and the other at the elbow.

McLaughlin's brother, Letcher, was made blind fifty years ago at the age of three years by a "percussion cap exploding. He walked freely about the house; but it was pathetic to see him go over a life novel to him. The sight, the breech, the barrel and all were examined carefully. He laughed like a delighted child when the take down apparatus was explained. In the morning he was eager to have his picture taken—although

he could never see it. I went on down the road which had ice on in places—ice which the horseback riders and wagon drivers dread in this region where rough and sharp shoe horses, as they say in the Adirondacks, are seldom needed. "The country gets better after you go down a ways," I was informed. I am told often I ought to go in such and such directions. "For they have fine big farms thataway." With an opportunity to go up the Shenandoah Valley "with its fine big farms," why I had chosen the mountain trails is not always to be satisfactorily by love of the beautiful joy in the novelties; I do not try to explain, unless I say it is because the people in the mountain are easier to get along with—a statement that is very true, as well as sufficiently explanatory.

I came down into the fine country soon, and dinner time coming on, I stopped at the best looking house dwelling in sight. It was well painted, doors of natural wood varnished, a comfortable wood pile and two hundred acres of cultivated land and a herd of stock in sight. Every thing was well picked up and prosperous. He was a son of the lady, Charles K. Gibson, by name.

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It was quite a cold day—ten degrees below freezing at noon, I judge. But the people I met all agreed that it was "mighty fresh." Many wore sarafas, and with hooked fingers hovered over the fire-logs from these indications, and though it did not seem so bad to me, I could tell that it was unusually cold weather, and not the kind to which the inhabitants were used.

I came to an old grist mill. It was kept by an old man who said I would be welcome at his house, a three miles below. Round the foot of wooded ridge sides, past large rocks, with glimpses of log cabins far up runs, or cornfields on side hills, I traveled on down. I regretted the approach of night. It was a picturesque little valley, where one rounded a turn every step or two. After a while the road ran level along the ridge, while the stream fell over its rocky bed, till suddenly the path ran down to the creek again. A split rail fence corner showed ahead, and then a log house on the far side of the stream. It was E. A. McLaughlin's. He was splitting wood with a six pound axe. His head was covered by a red Tam o' Shanter hat. I crossed the single stick bridge, gripping the pole handle tight. I was told to set my pack inside and come up to the fire and warn. The invitation with which one is welcomed all down the mountain range during cold weather.

Here the old story of decreasing game is heard. Markets have done the work. In one fall thirty-two deer were killed at the stand just below the mill. Bears still are seen occasionally. McLaughlin told of a big one over on the Alleghenies in the Greenbrier country, which "rolled out from under a log" onto the approach of a party of hunters in which he was. The bear reared up on his hind legs and trotted off like a fat man. Bullets and buckshot brought the beast down. Then it was found that both its forelegs had been cut off by traps—one at the wrist and the other at the elbow.

McLaughlin's brother, Letcher, was made blind fifty years ago at the age of three years by a "percussion cap exploding. He walked freely about the house; but it was pathetic to see him go over a life novel to him. The sight, the breech, the barrel and all were examined carefully. He laughed like a delighted child when the take down apparatus was explained. In the morning he was eager to have his picture taken—although

he could never see it. I went on down the road which had ice on in places—ice which the horseback riders and wagon drivers dread in this region where rough and sharp shoe horses, as they say in the Adirondacks, are seldom needed. "The country gets better after you go down a ways," I was informed. I am told often I ought to go in such and such directions. "For they have fine big farms thataway." With an opportunity to go up the Shenandoah Valley "with its fine big farms," why I had chosen the mountain trails is not always to be satisfactorily by love of the beautiful joy in the novelties; I do not try to explain, unless I say it is because the people in the mountain are easier to get along with—a statement that is very true, as well as sufficiently explanatory.

I came down into the fine country soon, and dinner time coming on, I stopped at the best looking house dwelling in sight. It was well painted, doors of natural wood varnished, a comfortable wood pile and two hundred acres of cultivated land and a herd of stock in sight. Every thing was well picked up and prosperous. He was a son of the lady, Charles K. Gibson, by name.

"That's quite a trick," he said of the pack and its outfit—an expression I soon became familiar with down Jacksons River, which I now was following. His eyes had the direct gaze, which is not a stare, with which one becomes more familiar the further south he goes.

Gibson likes to hunt. His dog is a bird and rabbit one, but is best for driving stock. His gun is a Spencer repeater. One day this fall he got into a flock of wild turkeys "back on the mountain." He shot four of the birds as quickly as one could have counted them. Less than a week previous to my coming he had killed one of the bronze fellows and seven pheasants in a day's hunt. "They're pretty thick," he said of the birds.

Dinner was of the sort one finds in the prosperous grazing country—beef with the blue grass and mountain range flavor, cooked in the pot and browned in the pan—nough said. It's hours to dinner to day and my appetite needs no whetting or memories.

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